SOME NEW BOOKS.

Thomas Paine.

Mr. MONCURE D. CONWAY has written and the Messrs. Putnam have published the first and only adequate life of *Thomas Paine* which has ever seen the light. The biographical sketch of Paine by his friend Rickman was truthful, indeed, but it was short. The authors of the other so-called lives have been rather controversial pamphleteers than biographers, and the hostile accounts of Paine to be found in the cyclopædias are, for the most part, based on the unfriendly narratives issued by George Chambers and James Cheetham. In the laborious work of evolving the real Paine from the mass of controversial literature, Mr. Conway has been impeded by no prejudice, either political or religious. The hostility that might once have obstructed him has passed away. The curators of archives, private collectors, and owners of important documents bearing on the subject have welcomed his effort to bring out the truth. He has brought to his task a love for it, the studies of some years, and the results of personal researches made in Europe and America, to which should be added the sense of responsibility acquired by a public speaker of long service.

The life of Thomas Paine naturally divides itself into four sections, namely: The educational period, the publication of "Common Sense" and the service he rendered to the cause of American independence, the publication of "The Rights of Man" and the author's relation to the English and French revolutionists, and, finally, the publication of the "Age of Reason" and the author's attitude toward free thought in matters of religion. Viewed collectively, the biography undertaken by Mr. Conway is that of an English mechanic of Quaker training caught in the political cyclones of the last century and set at the centre of its revolutions in the Old World and the New.

I.

Thomas Paine was born Jan. 29, 1737, at Thetford, in the county of Norfolk. His father, Joseph Paine, had a small farm, but he also carried on a staymaking business in Thetford, and his son was removed from school at the age of thirteen to be taught the art and mystery of making stays. Regarding the early years of his life a few casual reminiscences are to be found in his writings. "My parents," he records, "were not able to give me a shilling beyond what they gave me in education, and to do this they distressed themselves. My father being of the Quaker profession, it was my good fortune to have an exceedingly good moral education and a tolerable stock of useful learning. Though I went to the grammar school at Thetford, I did not learn Latin, not only because I had no inclination to learn languages, but because of the objection the Quakers had against the books in which the language is taught. But this did not prevent me from being acquainted with the subjects of all the Latin books used in the school. The natural bent of my mind was to science. I had some turn and I believe some talent for poetry, but this I rather repressed than encouraged, as dealing too much with the feelings and imagination. I happened, when a schoolboy, to pick up a pleasing natural history of Virginia, and from that day my inclination to see the western side of the Atlantic never left me."

Paine stuck to staymaking for nearly five years, and then, being seized with a longing for adventure, went to sea on a privateer. Of his experiences at sea there is no record, and very little is known of more important events of his life during the years immediately subsequent. In his twentieth year he found work in London with a staymaker, and remained there nearly two years. For his intellect this was a fruitful epoch. "As soon," he terms it, "as I was able I purchased a pair of globes and attended the philosophical lectures of Martyn and Ferguson, and afterward became acquainted with Dr. Davis of the Royal Society, then living in the Temple, and an excellent astronomer." In 1758 Paine found employment in his trade at Dover, and in the following year established himself in Sandwich, in Kent, as a master staymaker. Here at 22 he married Mary Lambert, an orphan, who was a servant to the wife of a woollen draper. The young couple began housekeeping, but Paine's business did not thrive and he went to Margate, where, in 1760, his wife died. Paine then concluded to abandon the staymaking business, and as his wife's father had been an exciseman he resolved to prepare himself for an office in the excise. After some months of study to that end in London he returned to his native town of Thetford in 1761 and obtained employment as a supernumerary officer of excise. In the following year he was appointed to gauge brewers' casks, and two years later (1764) he was set to watch smugglers. The latter post was a dangerous one. The exciseman who pounced on a party of smugglers got a special reward, but at the risk of his life. The salary was only £50 a year, the promotions were few, and the excise service had fallen into usages of negligence and corruption to which Paine was the first to call public attention. Referring to the small pay, he wrote: "After tax, charity, and fitting expenses are deducted there remains very little more than £46; and the expenses of housekeeping in many places cannot be brought under £14 a year, besides the purchase and the hazard of life, which reduces it to £32 per annum, or 1s. and 9d. farthing per day."

Mr. Conway considers it scarcely wonderful that Paine should on one occasion have fallen into the common practice of excisemen called "stamping"—that is, setting down surveys of work on his books without actually travelling to the trader's premises and examining specimens. For this case of "stamping," frankly confessed, Paine was discharged from office in August, 1765. After Paine's dismissal he supported himself for a while as a journeyman staymaker, and then we find him in London, where for some months there stood between him and starvation only a salary of £25 given to him by a Mr. Noble for teaching English in his academy. In January, 1767, he was employed in a school in Kensington. Four months later he was restored to the excise and appointed officer at Grampound, in Cornwall, but asked leave to await another vacancy. In February, 1768, he was deputed as officer in Lewes, in Sussex, whither he repaired and took up his abode in the house of a venerable Quaker, a tobacconist named Ollive. In this place he met Thomas Rickman, who became his lifelong friend, and has left some account of Paine's doings at Lewes. "In this place," writes Rickman, "he lived several years in habits of intimacy with a very respectable, sensible, and convivial set of acquaintances, who were entertained with his witty sayings and informed by his more serious conversation. In politics at this time he was a Whig, and notorious for that quality which has been defined as perseverance in a good cause and obstinacy in a bad one. He was tenacious of his opinions, which were bold, acute, and independent, and which he maintained with ardor, elegance, and argument."

In 1771 Paine married for his second wife Elizabeth, daughter of the Quaker tobacconist, with whom he had lodged, and who had died about two years before. Elizabeth was ten years younger than Paine and is said to have been pretty; being of Quaker parentage, she was no doubt fairly educated. Soon afterward the excisemen united in an appeal to Parliament to raise their salaries, and a sum of money raised to prosecute the matter was confided to Paine. In 1772 he prepared the plea for the excisemen, and Mr. Conway, who has read the document, says that it is as clear and complete as any lawyer could make it. Paine passed the whole of the ensuing winter in London, trying to influence members of Parliament and others in favor of his cause. Unable to get the matter before Parliament, he went back discouraged to Lewes, and it seemed to him like the crack of doom when, in April, 1774, he was dismissed from the excise. The ground of the dismissal has been misstated. Mr. Conway quotes the order of discharge, which is based on Paine's "having quitted his business without obtaining the Board's leave for so doing, and being gone off on account of the debts which he had contracted." It seems that no sooner was it known that the hope of increased salary for the excisemen had failed than he found himself in danger of arrest for debt. On this account he had left Lewes for a time, but it was only that he might take steps to make over all of his possessions to his creditors. This was effectually done, and at thirty-seven Paine found himself penniless. More serious trouble overtook him. In June of the same unhappy year Paine and his wife formally separated. The causes of their disagreement are enveloped in mystery. It has been stated by both friendly and hostile biographers that there was from the first no cohabitation, concerning the responsibility for which neither of them was ever induced to utter a word. Even his friend Rickman was warned off the subject by Paine, who, in reply to a question as to the reason of the separation, said: "It is nobody's business but my own; I had cause for it, but I will name it to no one."

Without a wife and without a hope, Paine came to London; but how he lived for the next few months is unknown. It is certain, however, that he made the acquaintance of Benjamin Franklin. In the Doctor's electrical experiments he took a deep interest, for Paine was devoted to science, and the extent of his studies is attested by his description of the new electrical machine and other scientific papers which he was subsequently to publish in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Franklin recognized Paine's ability, and believed he would be useful and successful in America.

II.

So Paine decided on migrating to the colonies, and left England in 1774. He bore a letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin to Richard Bache, his son-in-law, from which we make the following extract: "The bearer, Mr. Thos. Paine, is very well recommended to me as an ingenious, worthy young man. He goes to Pennsylvania with a view of settling there. I request you to give him your best advice and countenance, as he is quite a stranger there. If you can put him in a way of obtaining employment as a clerk, or assistant tutor in a school, or assistant surveyor, of all of which I think him very capable, so that he may procure a subsistence at least till he can make acquaintance and obtain a knowledge of the country, you will do well, and much oblige your affectionate father." In March, 1775, Paine writes Franklin from Philadelphia: "Your confidence in me has obtained for me many friends and much reputation, for which please accept my sincere thanks. I have been applied to by several gentlemen to instruct their sons at very advantageous terms to myself, and a printer and bookseller here, Robert Aitkin, has lately attempted a magazine, but, having little or no turn that way himself, he has applied to me for assistance."

For eighteen months Paine edited the *Pennsylvania Magazine or American Museum*, and probably there never was an equal amount of good literary work done on a salary of £50 a year. A feature of the magazine was the description by Paine of recent English inventions not known in the New World—a threshing machine, spinning machine, &c. These papers attracted the members of the Philosophical Society, founded by Franklin, and Paine was welcomed into that circle by Rittenhouse, Clymer, Rush, Muhlenberg, and other representatives of what was then the scientific and literary metropolis of America. Among Paine's articles on social subjects are a condemnation of the duel then challenged for the first time in this country; a protest against cruelty to animals, to whose rights Christendom was not awakened, and a plea for the rights of women, the first uttered in America. Paine was also the first to urge an extension of the principles of independence to the enslaved negro. He was the first to arraign monarchy and to point out the danger of its survival in the Presidency; the first to advocate international arbitration; the first to propose national and international copyright, and the first to suggest more rational ideas of marriage and divorce. In a word, the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, while it was edited by Paine, was a seed bag from which this sower scattered the seeds of great reforms, which were to be ripened with the progress of civilization.

It was during the autumn of 1775 that Paine wrote his pamphlet, "Common Sense," which, with the new year, burst from the press with an effect which has rarely been produced by types and paper in any age or country. Of the paramount influence of this pamphlet there can be no question. It reached Washington at Cambridge soon after tidings that Norfolk had been burned by Lord Dunmore, as Falmouth (now Portland, Me.) had been by Admiral Graves. Washington wrote: "A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense,' will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of separation." Edmund Randolph, our first Attorney-General, who had been on Washington's staff in the beginning of the war and conducted much of his correspondence, ascribed independence primarily to George III., but next to "Thomas Paine, an Englishman by birth, and possessing an imagination which happily combined political topics poured forth in a style hitherto unknown on this side of the Atlantic from the ease with which it insinuated itself into the hearts of the people who were unlearned or of the learned." No other pamphlet published during the Revolution is comparable with "Common Sense" for interest to the reader of to-day, or for value as a historical document. Therein, as in a mirror, is beheld the almost incredible England against which the colonies contended. Therein is reflected the moral, even religious enthusiasm, which raised the struggle above the foundation of a rebellion against taxation to a great human movement—a war for an idea. The art with which every sentence is feathered, for its aim is consummate. It was perhaps on this account that the work was for a time generally attributed to Franklin. It is said the Doctor was reproached by a loyal lady for using in it such an epithet as "The royal brute of Britain." He assured her that he had not written the pamphlet and would not so dishonor the brute creation. As regards the circulation of the pamphlet, it should be mentioned that one hundred and twenty thousand copies were sold within three months after its first appearance. In the end probably half a million copies were sold. Paine donated the copyright to the States for the cause of independence. As the price of a copy was two shillings, the author thus gave away a fortune in that pamphlet alone. Paine also gave to the States the copyright of his "Crisis," thirteen numbers of which were issued. Nevertheless he was taunted by tories as a "garreteer," but he ate his crust contentedly, peace finding him a penniless patriot who might easily have had fifty thousand pounds in his pocket.

Paine's services to the cause of independence by no means ended with the publication of "Common Sense." The interval from June 7 to July 1, 1776, was perilous for the patriot. News came of the approach of Lord Howe bearing from England the olive branch. The powerful colonies of New York and Pennsylvania were especially anxious to await the proposals for peace. At this juncture Paine issued a most effective pamphlet, called "A Dialogue Between the Ghost of Gen. Montgomery, Just Arrived from the Elysian Fields, and an American Delegate in a Wood Near Philadelphia." Montgomery, the first heroic figure fallen in the war, reproaches the hesitating delegate for willingness to accept pardon from a royal criminal for defending the rights of humanity. He points out that France only awaits their Declaration of Independence to come to their aid, and that America teems with patriots, heroes, and legislators who are impatient to burst forth into light and importance. The most telling part of the pamphlet, however, was a reply to the commercial apprehension of New York and Pennsylvania. "Your dependence upon the Crown is no advantage, but rather an injury, to the people of Great Britain, as it increases the power and influence of the King. The people are benefited only by your trade, and this they may have after you are independent of the Crown." There was a shrewd prescience of what actually happened in this opportune utterance.

Paine did not confine himself to writing; his Quaker principles did not prevent him from participating in the struggle which he approved of. While the signers of the Declaration of Independence were affixing their names, Paine resigned his editorship of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and marched with his musket to the front. He enlisted in the Pennsylvania division of the flying camp of ten thousand men who were to be sent wherever needed. In the army his pen was not idle. On Nov. 22, when the Continental forces had retreated to Newark, he began writing his first "Crisis." He could only write at night; during the day there was constant work for every soldier of the small body surrounding Washington. The paper appeared on Dec. 19, 1776, just before the battle of Trenton. The opening words heralded a victory: "These are the times that try men's souls." The very faults of the composition were effective to men who had seen Paine on the march and knew his words were written in sleepless intervals of unwearied labor. His opening sentence became a watchword, and with it upon their lips Washington's soldiers won the battle of Trenton and opened an auspicious new year for the colony.

On Jan. 21, 1777, Paine was appointed by the Council of Safety in Philadelphia secretary to the commission sent by Congress to treat with the Indians at Easton, Pa. The report was no doubt written by Paine, who for his services was paid £300 by the Pennsylvania Assembly—one of its advances which Congress afterward refunded. On April 17 Paine was elected secretary of the Congress Committee of Foreign Affairs. Still maintaining his place on Gen. Greene's staff, Paine complied with the wish of all the Generals by wielding his pen during the lull of hostilities which followed the battle of Trenton. He now followed up his first "Crisis" by a number of other papers bearing the same name, thirteen in all, and meanwhile discharged his executive functions, which were really those of Secretary of Foreign Affairs. On his experience in this office we need not dwell beyond mentioning that his controversy with Silas Deane ultimately caused him to resign. Whatever may be thought of his course in the Deane-Beaumarchais affair, there can be no doubt that the country was saved by him from a questionable payment unjustly pressed at a time when it must have crippled the Revolution. Congress was relieved, and he who relieved it was the sufferer. From the most important Congressional secretaryship he was reduced to a clerkship in Owen Biddle's law office. Nevertheless, Paine's patriotic interest in public affairs did not abate. In the summer of 1779 he wrote a number of articles in favor of maintaining the right of the United States to the Newfoundland fisheries in any treaty of peace that might be made. It is well known that this right was ultimately conceded.

It was one of the hardships incident to Paine's poverty that he was compelled to call attention to the value of his services. After some delay the Pennsylvania Assembly elected him its clerk. There was just enough in the treasury to pay Paine's salary in the year 1780. Out of his modest stipend he contributed $5,000 (Continental money) to the subscription of relief for the Continental army. In the same year the University of Pennsylvania celebrated the Fourth of July by conferring upon Paine the degree of M. A. In October of the same year Col. John Laurens, appointed to visit France for the purpose of procuring a loan, agreed to go if Paine would accompany him. The invitation was eagerly accepted by Paine, who hoped that after the business was transacted in France he might fulfil a plan of a literary descent on England. The two sailed from Boston early in February, 1781, and arrived in France in March. The mission was entirely successful, and the commissioners reached Boston on their return voyage in August, 1781, with 2,500,000 livres in silver, and in convoy a ship laden with clothing and military stores. It was this succor, mainly due, according to Lamartine, to Paine, which enabled Washington to carry out the campaign that resulted in the surrender of Cornwallis. For this great service Paine never received any payment or notice. This plan of obtaining aid from France was conceived by him and mainly executed by him. It was at a great risk that he went on this expedition. Had he been captured he could have hoped for little mercy from the British. Laurens, who, as Vergennes complained, had nearly upset the business, got the glory; Paine, who had given up his clerkship of the Assembly, ran the greater danger and done the real work, got nothing.

In Philadelphia, however, he was a literary lion, and he had to appear on all festive occasions; but he was without means. Having given his all—copyrights, secretaryship, clerkship—to secure the independence of a nation, he found himself in a state of destitution. He fairly pointed the moral of Solomon's fable; by his wisdom he had saved the besieged land, yet none remembered that poor man, so far as his needs were concerned. Paine's determination to make no money for his early pamphlets arose partly from his religious and Quaker sympathies. He could not have entered into any war that did not appear to him sacred, and in such a cause his testimony could not be that of the hireling. His "Common Sense," his "First Crisis," were inspirations, and during all the time of danger his pen was consecrated to the cause. He had, however, strict and definite ideas of copyright, and was the first to call the attention of the country to its necessity and even to the international justice of literary property.

As a matter of fact, in the same winter after he had ventured across the Atlantic and helped to obtain a great sum of money for the struggling colonies, he suffered want. In the diary of Robert Morris there is an entry under date of January, 1782, to the effect that Washington had twice expressed the desire that some provision should be made for Paine. An arrangement was ultimately made by which Paine was to be paid a salary of $800 a year for secret services by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Under this agreement Paine apparently received one year's salary—no more. His "Thirteenth Crisis"—the last—published in April, 1783, was his farewell address. It opened with the words: "The times that tried men's souls are over, and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever saw is gloriously and happily accomplished." Elsewhere in this final paper he says: "It was the cause of America that made me an author. The force with which it struck my mind, and the dangerous condition in which the country was in, by courting an impossible and an unnatural reconciliation with those who were determined to reduce her, instead of striking out into the new line that could save her, made it impossible for me to be silent, and if, in the course of more than seven years, I have rendered her any service, I have likewise added something to the reputation of literature by freely and disinterestedly employing it in the great cause of preparing men for happier times. I therefore take leave of the subject. I have most sincerely followed it from beginning to end, and through all its turns and windings, and whatever country I may hereafter be in, I shall always feel an honest pride at the part I have taken and acted, and a gratitude to nature and Providence for putting it in my power to be of some use to mankind."

After the conclusion of the treaty of peace, Paine, who was entirely destitute, tried in vain to obtain from Congress some substantial recognition of his work. It was not until after the State of New York had presented Paine with 277 acres at New Rochelle, and Pennsylvania had voted to him £500, that Congress ordered the Treasurer to pay him $3,000, a sum too small to cover the expenses of his journey to France.

In April, 1787, Paine, who had designed a bridge for the Schuylkill, sailed for France in order to obtain the approval of his plans by French engineers. Franklin had given him letters of introduction, but he hardly needed them. He was already a hero of the French progressists, and fell into intimate relations with such men as Condorcet, and apparently also Danton. It was no doubt this intercourse which enabled him to print in England his remarkable prophecy concerning the change going on in the French mind. It is certain that he returned to Europe as an apostle of peace and good will. While the engineers were considering his daring scheme of an iron arch of five hundred feet, he was devising with the Cardinal Minister Brienne, a bridge of friendship across the Channel. He drew up a paper in this sense on which the Minister wrote and signed his approval. The bridge as sanctioned by the Academy he sent to Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society; the proposal for friendship between France and England he carried by his own hand to Edmund Burke.

III.

On his arrival in London Paine gave to the papers a manuscript on which he had been engaged, and straightway went to Thetford, his native town. His father had died the year before; his mother, now in her ninety-first year, he found in the comfort with which his remittances had provided her. At this time Paine settled on his mother an allowance of nine shillings per week, which, in a country town, at that period, was ample for her comfort. Returning from his visit to his aged mother Paine became a lion in the British metropolis. We find him now passing a week with Edmund Burke, now at the country seat of the Duke of Portland, or enjoying the hospitalities of Lord Fitzwilliam, at Wentworth House. He is entertained and consulted on public affairs by Fox, Lord Lansdowne, Sir George Staunton, Sir Jos. Banks; and many an effort is made to enlist his pen. At Rotherham, in Yorkshire, where the Messrs. Walker fitted up a workshop for Paine, he was visited not only by famous engineers, but by political personages. The favorable impression he made on his visitors was largely due to his freedom from airs. They found him in his workshop, hammer in hand, proud only of free America and of his beautiful arch. He was in truth a living Declaration of Independence.

The year 1789 found France afflicted with a sort of famine and its finances in disorder, while the eyes of its people were directed to the new world by the French comrades of Washington. Paine's first pamphlet, expurgated of anti-monarchism in translation, had been widely circulated, and John Adams had, in 1779, found himself welcomed in France as the supposed author of "Common Sense." The lion's skin had dropped swiftly from Paine's disgusted enemy, and when ten years later the lion himself became known in Paris, he was hailed with enthusiasm. This was in the autumn of 1789, when Paine witnessed the scenes that ushered in the "Crowned Republic." Jefferson had sailed for home in September and Paine was recognized by Lafayette and other leaders of opinion as the real representative of the United States. To him Lafayette gave for presentation to Washington the key of the destroyed Bastile, ever since visible at Mount Vernon. To be similarly eclipsed in Paris by the famous author did not please Gouverneur Morris, who had just been made American Minister to France. For a time, however, he found it impossible to brush Paine aside, but the latter relieved him of annoyance by returning to England to look after his bridge. He was to sacrifice his bridge, however, and all his prospects of success in England, for at this moment somebody was needed to defend the cause of liberty against the powerful attacks of a renegade assailant, Edmund Burke.

Edmund Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in France" appeared about Nov. 1, 1790. Paine immediately began his reply. No man had hitherto been more idealized by Paine than Burke, not only by reason of his defence of American patriots, but because of his far-reaching exposure of despotism. At the very time that Paine was writing "Common Sense" Burke was pointing out that "the power of the crown, almost dead and rotten as prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength and far less odium, under the name of influence." Burke had been the intimate friend of Priestley and other Liberals, and, when Paine arrived in 1787, had taken him to his heart and home. Paine maintained his faith in Burke after Priestley and Price had remarked a change. At last, however, after Burke had made his attack on French reformers in the Parliament of 1790, and had emphasized his disapproval of him in his "Reflections on Revolution in France," Paine not only mourned for him as a lost leader, but regarded him as a traitor to his principles. To demolish Burke, however, was the least part of Paine's task. Burke's objections to revolution were indeed already answered in the Government established in America, presided over by a man to whom the world paid homage. To Washington Paine dedicated his "Rights of Man." His real design was to write a Constitution for the English nation, and to-day the spirit of political history may find in Burke's pamphlet the fossilized and in Paine's the actual Constitution of Great Britain. For adequacy to a purpose, Paine's "Rights of Man" has never been surpassed. Burke practically acknowledged it to be unanswerable by argument when he said that the refutation it deserved was "that of criminal justice."

From the outset the "Rights of Man" produced a great impression. It powerfully reënforced the Constitutional Society which had been formed seven years before, and which Paine had joined. The book was adopted as their *magna charta*. In Ireland the work was widely welcomed. The "Rights of Man" was the first exposition of the republicanism of Jefferson, Madison, and Edmund Randolph that had yet appeared, and, curiously enough, as this republicanism was just then struggling against reaction in the United States, the first storm raised by Paine's work occurred in America. The enthusiasm, however, for Paine and his principles was so overwhelming that Edmund Randolph and Jefferson made an effort to secure him a place in Washington's Cabinet. But though reënforced by Madison they failed. It will be remembered that Paine had dedicated the pamphlet to Washington. He sent a copy of it to him with a letter. Nine months elapsed before Washington answered this letter, and one may see in the ingenious vagueness of the answer and in his omission to acknowledge the dedication of Paine's book, that he mistrusts the European revolution and its American allies.

More than fifty thousand copies of the first part of the "Rights of Man" had been sold in England, and the public eagerly awaited the author's next work. The second part appeared in February, 1792. In this Paine's political philosophy was freely and fully developed. Mr. Conway summarizes Paine's views in the following sentences: "Government is the organization of the aggregate of those natural rights which individuals are not competent to secure individually, and therefore surrender to the control of society in exchange for the protection of all rights. Republican government is that in which the welfare of the whole nation is the sole object. Democracy is the whole people governing themselves without secondary means. Representative government is the control of a nation by persons elected by the whole nation. The rights of man mean the right of all to representation."

It seems incredible that the publication of such views should expose the author to punishment, but such was the case. On May 14, 1792, Paine's publisher was prosecuted; a week later a royal proclamation was issued against seditious writings, and on the same day proceedings were begun against Paine. The people, nevertheless, continued to buy his book. No doubt the King's proclamation impeded its distribution, but, according to an estimate made in 1793, the sales of the "Rights of Man" up to that year amounted to 200,000 copies. Since April, 1792, the French translation of the book had been in almost every French home. It gave practical shape to the philosophy of visionary reformers; by it the idea of a national convention was made the purpose of the French leaders who were really inspired by an enthusiasm of humanity. On Aug. 26 1792, the National Assembly conferred on Paine the title of French citizen, and he was presently elected to the Convention by three different departments, the votes being apparently unanimous. One of these departments, Calais, sent a municipal officer to London to entreat Paine's acceptance of the seat. Paine was so eager to meet the English Government in court that he delayed his answer. But his friends had reason to fear that his martyrdom might be less mild than he anticipated, and urged him to go to France. Finally, on Sept. 13, 1792, he was hurried off to Dover, escaping by some twenty minutes the officers instructed to arrest him. Before leaving London, however, Paine managed to have an interview with the American Minister, Pinkney, who thought he could do good service in the Convention.

IV.

The reception given to Thomas Paine at Calais was astonishing. As the packet entered the port a salute was fired from the battery and cheers sounded along the shore. As the representative for Calais stepped on French soil soldiers drew up in line along his passage; the officers embraced him, and a lady advanced requesting his permission to put the national cockade in his hat. In the town Paine was presented to the municipality, embraced by each member, and addressed by the Mayor. At the meeting of the Constitutional Society of Calais he sat beside the President, beneath the bust of Mirabeau and the united colors of France, England, and America. The next day there was a meeting in the church where saints and madonnas looked down on the extraordinary Quaker who had become a savior of society. In the evening, at the theatre, a box was decorated "For the Author of the Rights of Man."

On Sept. 19, 1792, Paine reached Paris, and two days afterward took his seat in the Convention. A fortnight later he was placed next to Siéyès at the head of the Committee to frame a Constitution. He would have been placed at the head but for his inability to speak French. The speeches which he made in the Convention were always translated by another member. His want of familiarity with French did not, however, disable him for work on the Committee to frame a Constitution, for at least four of his fellow members understood English—Condorcet, Danton, Barrère, and Brissot.

It is well known that Paine tried to save the life of Louis XVI. by moving in the Convention that he should be judicially tried. His ingenious plea made an impression on his fellow members, but the delay which it involved was fatal to it. The only expedient left was to work privately among the members and secure if possible a majority that would be content, having killed the King, to save the man and preserve him as a hostage for the good behavior of Europe. This was now Paine's idea, and no man ever toiled more faithfully for another than he did for the discrowned Louis XVI. It is noteworthy that at the very time that he was trying to save the representative of monarchy in France, he was arraigned in his absence in an English court on a charge of treason, found guilty, and outlawed.

Considering the state of men's minds in Paris at the beginning of 1793 Mr. Conway well says: "What would a knowledge of the French tongue have been worth to Paine, just then the leading republican of the world, and the one man sleeplessly seeking to save a king's life? He could not plead with his enraged fellow republicans, who at length overpowered even Brissot, so far as to draw him into the fatal plan of voting for the King's death, coupled with submission to the verdict of the people. Paine saw that there was at the moment no people, but only an infuriated clan." His own proposal was that Louis XVI. should be held as a hostage for the peaceful behavior of the other kings, and that when their war on France had ceased he should be banished to the United States. This plan was rejected by the Convention, which was dominated by fear of the Jacobins, but Paine persisted in his merciful purpose, and, when his name was called, cried out: "I vote for the detention of Louis till the end of the war, and after that for his perpetual banishment." He managed to declare his vote in French, and may have given courage to others, for there was only a narrow majority in favor of the death penalty. Subsequently, when the question came up whether the execution of the King should be delayed or should take place in twenty-four hours, Paine made, amid the denunciations of the Jacobins, a powerful plea for delay, but he was once more unsuccessful.

Paine's efforts to save Louis offended the Mountain and brought him into grave danger when that party acquired ascendancy. Christmas Day, 1793, was celebrated by the terrorist, Bourdon de l'Oise, with a denunciation of Paine, after which another member of the Convention moved the exclusion of foreigners from all public functions during the war. The motion being passed, Paine was shut out of the Convention and brought under the law against aliens of hostile nations. He was arrested on Dec. 27, and on the following day committed to prison. He narrowly escaped the guillotine, for on the death of Robespierre there was found among his papers, and laid by a committee before the Convention a "Demand that Thomas Paine be decreed of accusation for the interests of America as much as France." The committee, which was composed of Robespierre's successful enemies, made a strong point of this sentence, and added: "Why Thomas Paine more than another? Because he helped to establish the liberty of both worlds." After an imprisonment of 315 days Paine was liberated, and not only was he restored to his seat in the Convention, but a pension was offered, which he declined. He practically withdrew from public life in France, when, in October, 1795, the Convention gave place to the Directory.

It was while Paine was expecting imprisonment, and when he despaired of seeing realized his dream of an international republic, that he wrote the third of his famous books, "The Age of Reason." With regard to this work, Mr. Conway concedes that it is at times too harsh and militant. He contends, however, that the common notion that the "Age of Reason" abounds in vulgarity is due to a lack of literary culture in those who have derived that impression from its perusal. It requires, he says, a scholarly perception to recognize in its occasional expressions, by some called "coarse," the simple Saxon of Norfolkshire. Mr. Conway also pronounces it a mistake to regard the "Age of Reason" as largely made up of scoffs. The Bishop of Llandaff, in his reply to Paine, was impressed by the elevated theism of the work, to portions of which he ascribed a philosophical sublimity. On the scurrility attributed to Paine the author of this biography remarks: "No intellect that knows the law of literature, that deep answers only unto deep, can suppose that the effect of Paine's "Age of Reason," on which book the thirty years' war for religious freedom in England was won, after many martyrdoms, came from a scoffing or scurrilous work." Mr. Conway also deems it misleading to speak of Paine as an opponent of Christianity. Nothing now acknowledged as Christianity by enlightened Christians of any denomination was known to him. It was the theology of the last century that he assailed. It is significant that, soon after the appearance of Part First of the "Age of Reason," it was expurgated of its negative criticisms, probably by some English Unitarians, and republished as a sermon. Mr. Conway thinks that were this so-called sermon read in any orthodox church to-day it would be regarded as admirable. The truth is, according to this biographer, that the "Age of Reason" was meant, not to propagate, but to combat infidelity. It raised before the French the deity of Herbert, of Newton and of other English deists, whose works were unknown in France. But when Paine's positive theism is scrutinized, there is discernible a distinctive nucleus forming within the nebulous mass of deistical speculations. Paine recognized a deity only in the astronomic laws and intelligible order of the universe, and in the corresponding reason and moral nature of man. Like Kant, he was filled with awe by the starry heavens and man's sense of right. To the atheist he said: "We did not make ourselves; we did not make the principles of science, which we discover and apply, but cannot alter."

It was in September, 1802, that Paine left France for the United States. He expected a cordial welcome in America, for his friend Jefferson was President, and the party which had sympathized with the French revolution was now dominant. It is true that in Virginia and the South the "Age of Reason" was fairly discussed, its influence being so great that Patrick Henry wrote a reply which he subsequently burned. In Virginia deism, though prevailing largely, had not prevented its adherents from supporting the Church as an institution. It had become their habit to talk of such topics only in private. Jefferson had not ventured to express his views in public, and was troubled at finding himself mixed up with the heresies of Paine. The Federalist press used Paine's infidelity to belabor the President, and the author had to write defensive letters from the moment of his arrival. Eager to disembarrass the Administration, Paine published a letter in which he said that he should not ask or accept any office, and presently he left Washington for Bordentown, which had at one time been his home. Here, and in his subsequent journey through New Jersey, he met with a great deal of ill treatment. Bordentown was placarded with pictures of the devil flying away with Paine, and the pulpits set up a chorus of vituperation. When he drove with his old friend Col. Kirkbride to Trenton, so furious was the pious mob that he was refused a seat in the Trenton stage. When starting for Brunswick they were hooted and a gang of rowdies played the "Rogue's March." "These," says Mr. Conway, "were the people for whose liberties Paine had marched over that same road on foot with musket in hand. At Trenton insults were heaped upon the man who by camp fires had written the 'Crisis' which animated the conquerors of the Hessians at that place in the times that tried men's souls. These people he had helped to make free—free to cry Crucify!"

At New York Paine found both the religious and the political parties sharply divided over him. Many of his old friends, however, refused to visit him, and he was gradually deserted even by most of the Jeffersonians. His last years were passed partly on his farm in New Rochelle and partly in lodgings in New York. After a lingering illness he died in a house in Grove street on June 8, 1809. Shortly before his death two clergymen had invaded his room, and as soon as they spoke about his opinions Paine said: "Let me alone; good morning." Mme. Bonneville, the French lady in whose house he died, asked if he was satisfied with the treatment he had received at her hands, and he said, "Oh, yes." These, and not the utterances which have been falsely ascribed to him, were the last words of Thomas Paine. His body was accompanied to the grave beyond New Rochelle by two negroes, a Quaker preacher named Willett Hicks, and by the Mme. Bonneville just mentioned and her children, who were Catholics. Mme. Bonneville placed her son Benjamin, afterward a General in the United States army, at one end of the grave and, standing herself at the other end, cried as the earth fell on the coffin: "Oh, Mr. Paine, my son stands here as the testimony of the gratitude of America, and I for France."

V.

In a chapter headed "Personal Traits" Mr. Conway examines and refutes some of the charges which have been brought against Paine's personal character. He shows that Paine's relations to Mme. Bonneville were of the most exemplary and admirable character. After perusing some thousands of documents concerning Paine, Mr. Conway is convinced that no charge of sensuality could be brought against him by any one acquainted with the facts, except out of malice. The present biographer disclaims a disposition to suppress anything, and declares that had Paine held, or practised, any latitudinarian theory of sexual liberty it would be recorded in this book. The truth is that during Paine's life no imputation of sexual immorality was heard of. It is certain that he never told or listened to indecent anecdotes, and that he had the strongest aversion to profanity.

Prodigal of snuff, Paine, used tobacco in no other form. Not until some years after his return to America could slovenliness in respect of dress be observed in him, and the contrary was often remarked in former times. After he had come to New York and was neglected by the ladies and gentlemen with whom he had once associated, he became careless of his personal appearance. "Let those dress who need it," he said to a friend. With regard to the charges of excessive drinking made against Paine, Mr. Conway has sifted a mass of conflicting testimony and arrived at the following conclusions: In earlier life Paine drank spirits, as was the custom in England and America, and he unfortunately selected brandy, which causes alcoholic indigestion, and may have partly produced the oft-quoted witness against him—a somewhat red nose. His nose was prominent, and began to be red when he was fifty-five. His career in America during the Revolutionary period had been free from any suspicion of intemperance. Paine himself told his friend Rickman that once in Paris, when borne down by public and private affliction, he had been driven to excess. That period Mr. Conway has identified with a few weeks in 1793, when his dearest friends were on their way to the guillotine, whither he daily expected to follow them. After that Paine abstained altogether from spirits while in France, and drank wine in moderation. As to his habits during his later years in America, a large number of witnesses testify that, compared with most men of the time, he was actually abstemious. At New Rochelle his supply of liquor was one quart of rum per week. In his seventy-second year and last, at a time when he was almost kept alive by spirits, his supply was three quarts of rum per week. Jarvis, the artist, in whose house he had resided for five months, declared that Paine did not and could not drink much. Col. Fellows and Judge Hertell, who were in constant intercourse with him during the last seven years of his life, testify that he never kept any company but what was entirely respectable, and that all accusations of drunkenness were grossly untrue. They saw him under all circumstances, they said, and knew that he was never intoxicated. That was a drinking age, but Paine, like Jefferson, could bear but little spirits, so that he was constitutionally temperate. It was to Judge Hertell that Andrew Jackson said: "Thomas Paine needs no monument made by hands; he has erected a monument in the hearts of all lovers of liberty."

M. W. H.

Sacred Pigeons of Venice.

From the St. Louis Republic.

It may be of interest to such readers as like to sentimentalize on sacred subjects to know that the "Holy Pigeons of St. Mark's" have been recognized as such by the authorities of Venice for more than a thousand years—ever since the year 877.

In olden times it was the custom of the sacristans of St. Mark's Church to release doves and pigeons, fettered with paper, after the religious services of Palm Sunday. The fetters partially disabled the poor birds, and such of those as did not escape were caught by the people, who fatted them for Easter dinner.

Sometimes one and sometimes a dozen of the poor fluttering creatures would manage to break the paper thongs which bound wings and feet together, whereupon they almost invariably sought refuge on the roof and in the steeples of the historic old church.

All of the escaped birds assumed a certain sacredness, and, it being against the law to kill or harm them in any way, increased to enormous numbers. During the time of the republic the "Sacred Pigeons of St. Mark's" became objects of national solicitude, tons of grain being annually supplied for their maintenance.

After the fall of the republic thousands of them starved to death and all would have died but for provision made by a pious old lady, whose will perpetually provides for them.

A GREAT GLACIER CLIMB.

The Longest Glacier in the Temperate Zone Ascended by Mr. Conway.

Mr. W. M. Conway, who was sent out by the Royal Geographical Society of London last spring to explore the Kara Koram Mountains and their mighty glaciers north of Cashmere, has accomplished the most brilliant feats of mountain and glacier climbing that any explorer has achieved in years. He has sent to the society a report of his ascent of the Baltoro glacier, over forty miles in length and the longest glacier that is known in temperate regions, and of his ascent of an ice-covered mountain over 23,000 feet high at the upper end of the glacier.

He began the ascent of the Baltoro glacier on Aug. 5. He had little idea on starting of the discomforts before him. His party included three Englishmen besides himself, an Alpine guide, and four Sepoys detailed from an Indian regiment. Fully two-thirds of the entire length of the glacier was so completely covered with stone débris that the ice was not visible except where lakes or crevasses occur. He was unable to ascend along the banks at the sides of the glacier, for they were not traversable. He was therefore forced to go up the horrible middle of the ice. The surface was not flat, but was a series of prodigious mounds. He measured one of them, which was over 200 feet high, and it was usually easier to climb over these mounds than to circumvent them. The stones that rested upon the ice were constantly giving way under foot. The consequence was that the progress of the heavily laden Sepoys was slow and the marches had to be short.

The party was nearly two weeks ascending this ice river, four days of which time they remained in camp on account of stormy weather. When they finally turned up a tributary glacier in order to ascend the mountain, they had reached a height of 16,000 feet above the sea. All through the journey the cold was very severe. The party was very heavily laden because in addition to their food supplies it was necessary to carry a quantity of fuel.

It was not till Aug. 25, twenty days after they had left the foot of the glacier, that they began the assault upon the icy peak which they intended to surmount. Two or three of the party had become disabled by cold and fatigue, and had to return to a camp established on the glacier. The party complained of some discomfort which travellers among the Himalayas have often mentioned. The sun day after day came out with scorching power, and while their feet were numbed with cold their bodies were far too hot to be comfortable. Mr. Conway says the great variations between biting cold and grilling heat are the chief impediments to mountaineering at high altitudes in those regions. Not only the cold and the heat alike are hard to endure, but the change from one to the other seems to weaken the forces and render the whole body feeble.

Ascending the steep slope of the final peak, their climbing irons were of the greatest assistance. They found to their dismay after climbing a few hundred feet that the upper part of the peak was not of snow, but of hard, blue ice, covered with a thin layer of snow. Every step they took had to be cut through the snow into the ice. The ice was too hard for the steel points of the climbing irons to penetrate until it had been prepared by a stroke or two of the axe. The Alpine guide said the work of step cutting was far more fatiguing than he had ever experienced in Switzerland. One of the Sepoys was overtaken by mountain sickness and had to be left behind. Now and then a puff of air inspired the party with a little life. Most of the time they suffered from the rarefication of the air.

Reaching the top, about 23,000 feet above the sea, Conway named the mountain Pioneer Peak. He saw the most glorious mountain views on every side. The whole panorama of valley, mountain, glacier, and snow has an effect, at that elevation, of majestic repose. The observers were far above the noises of avalanches and rivers, and nature's forces were reduced to mere insignificance as they gazed thousands of feet below them upon the scenery. Many of the mountains they saw had not before been seen by human eye. They remained at the top for an hour and a quarter, for it was hard to tear themselves away from a scene so magnificent and so rare. They could look straight down the Baltoro glacier. The southward scenery was wholly new to them as it burst into view for the first time when they reached the summit; but it was to the westward that the greatest area was displayed to their gaze. One of the mountains to the west, which Conway says is the finest mountain he ever saw, is about 25,000 feet high and is unmarked on any map. Conway named the mountain the Guardian of the Mustagh.

It was comparatively easy to descend the peak to their camp of the night before. After they had got below the region of ice only a long snow slope separated them from their tent, and they seated themselves on the steep snow and slid down to their camp in less than a quarter of an hour.

ONE PHASE OF OPERA ATTRACTS HIM.

The Rev. Tom Dixon's Bizarre Figure and Big Opera Glass at the Ballet.

Paradoxical though the statement may seem, nobody laments the Metropolitan Opera House disaster more than the Rev. Tom Dixon. The sporting parson is not a sentimentalist. He has no concern for the losses of Mr. Abbey nor sympathy for the vicissitudes of the singers thrown out of a profitable engagement. If we may accept the affirmations of so irresponsible a person, he even assures us that, like Elia, he has no sense of music. The soul bottled up in Mr. Dixon's elongated body was not stirred by the coming of either Dvorak or Nikisch, and Herr Seidl may reduce the Philharmonic seats to a minimum price without tempting the Twenty-third street imitator of Talmage. Mr. Dixon does not mourn the vanished art of the opera. He grieves over the loss of its ladies. On frequent occasions last winter he was a familiar but bizarre figure at the Metropolitan. In more senses than one he was a deadhead. By the accident of officiating at the marriage ceremony of a newspaper man and an actress he received, possibly in lieu of a fee, the privilege of occupying the journalist's seat at the opera on off nights.

In the assemblage of correctly attired gentlemen and ladies his gaunt, angular form, draped loosely in an ill-fitting frock coat and baggy trousers, excited universal if not flattering attention. But the parson cared nothing for the scorn with which his neighbors shrunk away from him in the orchestra chairs, and returned with indifference the suspicious stares of the ushers. The reverend Tom was there for business. He paid no attention to matters that other people had come to enjoy. Extracting a huge field glass from his tail pocket, he screwed it carefully into focus, and discovering a box in which the ladies were particularly décolleté, he gazed at them long and earnestly, only laying down his glass at intervals to make notes on the back of an envelope. Meanwhile Mme. Lehmann might execute one of her most dramatic passages, or Jean de Reszké sing one of his most impassioned arias, but nothing in music could woo Mr. Dixon's gaze from the beautiful necks of the ladies.

When the ballet came on, however, the parson's telescope was promptly transferred from the boxes to the stage. Yet even in this moment of artistic interest his actions were extraordinary. While everybody was admiring the airy pirouettes of the premiere, Mlle. Salmoiraghi, the reverend Tom's eye was glued to a pretty black-orbed coryphée who dressed lower and kicked higher than her companions. This young dancer, finally observing his scrutiny, attempted in her coy and girlish way to strike up a flirtation across the footlights. But the parson's only response to this amatory invitation consisted in taking more notes. Then he went home and presently preached a sermon against the wickedness of wealth and the sure proof that ballet dancers were an element of the corruption of Tammany.

On one occasion Mr. Dixon was slowly working his way out of the Metropolitan after a superb performance of "Die Meistersinger." As he crowded rudely past the throng in his hurry to get to the street, one gentleman happened to say to his companion, "Was it not magnificent?"

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Dixon, who thought the remark was addressed to him. "It was very fine. But what does it all mean?"

"Mean!" ejaculated the Wagnerian, indignantly. "It means that you must have every element of a donkey except its ears."

This Is a Scotch Joke.

From the Dundee News.

A farmer's wife, not a hundred miles from Dingwall, has a great deal of [illegible] with her servants. The other day one of them came to her to [illegible]

"Mistress, I fear I shall not be able to work much longer. I think I am going blind."

"Why, how is that? You seem to get along pretty well with your work."

"Yes, but I can no longer see any meat on my plate at dinner."

The farmer's wife understood, and the next day the servants were served with very large and very thin pieces of meat.

"How now," the girl exclaimed, "my sight has come back. I can see better than ever."

"How is that, Bella?"

"Why, at this moment," replied Bella, "I can see the plate through the meat."